



State of Vermont

Department of Libraries Agency of Administration

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GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARIES APPLYING FOR STANDARDS AS A GROUP

To ensure that all Vermonters have access to a basic level of public library service, the Department of Libraries encourages public libraries to meet the Minimum Standards for Vermont Public Libraries, last revised in 1998. The Department recognizes that some public libraries, regardless of the effort or intentions of the trustees, librarian, or community, may not be able to meet standards completely. The Department of Libraries encourages these libraries to join with neighboring public libraries to meet standards, thereby offering a minimum level of service to their communities. There are several ways this can occur:

Branch libraries

A branch library is "an auxiliary unit of an administrative entity which has at least all of the following: 1) separate quarters; 2) an organized collection of library materials; 3) ... staff; and 4) regularly scheduled hours for being open to the public" (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993).

A Vermont public library may choose to affiliate with a larger public library either in the same town or in another town. One board of trustees and a librarian should administer all library service for the library and its branch(es), even though the branch(es) may offer distinct staff, hours, and services.

If a library with one or more branches wishes to meet standards, only the designated "main" library must meet all of the minimum standards. The degree to which branch libraries must meet standards shall be the decision of the library's trustees.

Cooperating libraries

Several small libraries, in the same town or in different towns, may join together to meet standards while remaining separate, independent public libraries, with their own boards of trustees, operating budgets, staffs, and collections. One or more of the libraries may be able to meet standards alone, or none of them may be able to meet standards.

If one library in the group meets standards completely but wishes to affiliate with one or more libraries which cannot, the additional libraries will be considered as branches for the purposes of meeting standards. The trustees of all of the libraries should agree to designate a "main" library which must meet all of the minimum standards. The degree to which the other library or libraries meet standards shall be the decision of all of the library trustees involved.

If none of the libraries in the group meets standards completely on its own, the libraries should meet them collectively and agree to serve all of the residents of the municipalities involved free of charge. All of the libraries must meet at least the following standards:

- 1c (sign)
- 1d (hours posted)
- 1e (telephone)
- 1f (basic services free)
- 1f (nondiscrimination)
- 1g (public accommodations)
- 1h (ADA)
- 1i (safety procedures)
- 1j (fire safety and health)
- 1l (community relations)
- 2c (reimbursement)
- 3b & c (cooperation)
- 3d (interlibrary loan)
- 3e (encourages ILL)
- 3g (statewide literacy)
- 3h (cooperation)
- 4 a-h (librarian)
- 4j-k (continuing education)
- 5a (materials budget)
- 5d (collection dev.)
- 5e (timely response)
- 5f (awareness)
- 6 a-n (trustees)
- 7 a (mission)

The degree to which the libraries meet the remaining standards shall be the decision of all of the library trustees involved after participating in a cooperative planning process.

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